



UNIT-3

How to Establish and Maintain Rapport

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Understand how to develop a deeper rapport with others.

Unit 3

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Developing Rapport

Defining Rapport

Traditionally, rapport has been defined as a sense of mutual understanding, respect, and friendliness. It is the presence of a co-operative relationship based on trust and honesty.

NLP takes rapport one step further by defining it as the *unconscious relationship* between two people. NLP can help you get in sync with another person so that you're speaking the same conscious and unconscious language, making it easier to create a win-win outcome.

Rapport means showing someone that you understand and respect them as a human being and that you support them. This doesn't mean that you have to agree with everything that they say, but in accordance with NLP principles, understand where they are coming from and why they believe in particular things.

It is important to understand when it is appropriate to create rapport and how deep to go. Let's say that you are a computer repair technician. You probably want to create a good rapport to help the customer solve their problem, but since your interaction will be short, you don't need to get to an extremely personal level. Or, if you're negotiating, you might need to break rapport to make a good decision.

Matching and Mirroring

Introduction

There are a few different ways to create and strengthen rapport. When you begin communication with someone, you should first use basic NLP techniques to analyze their thought processes and representational systems. Once you have established a basic connection and a mutual sense of trust, then you can work on developing and deepening rapport.

Like other NLP techniques, you must use these methods in a discreet manner to avoid irritating or insulting the other person. Not every technique is appropriate in every situation. And remember, these are just guidelines, not hard and fast rules.

Matching and Mirroring

One of the easiest ways to develop rapport is to mirror or match the other person's body language and non-verbal signals. We can't stress how important it is to do this subtly so that the other person doesn't feel like they're talking to a parrot! Let's look at some of the techniques that you can try.

Body Language

It is generally very easy to subtly *match* another person’s body language, such as their posture, breathing rate, and gestures. If they lean back, you might do the same (subtly, a few moments after they do so). Or, you might perform a *reciprocal movement*; that is, if you start tapping your pencil, I might subtly start tapping my foot in the same rhythm. You might even *mirror* them; if they tilt their head to the left you might tilt your head to the right.

Of course, you should only mirror the aspects of their body language that feel natural to you.

Voice Characteristics

Never, ever attempt to do an imitation of a person’s voice or to match their accent. This is almost always insulting. You can, however, mimic some basic voice features, including:

- Ñ Volume of their voice
- Ñ Speed (fast or slow)
- Ñ Tone (high or low)

Sensory Systems

Another good way of developing rapport is to tune into the sensory system that the person is using and adapt your language and gestures accordingly. Here’s a quick guide.

Category	Indicator	Sensory System
Body Language	Pointing at the eyes	Visual
	Tugging on earlobes	Auditory
	Sniffing	Olfactory
	Extending the tongue	Gustatory
	Gestures with limbs	Kinesthetic
Voice Characteristics	Speaking slowly	Kinesthetic
	Pausing frequently	Kinesthetic
	Even-paced voice	Auditory
	Speaking quickly	Visual
	Steady tone of voice	Auditory

	Deeper tone of voice	Kinesthetic
	Higher than normal tone of voice	Visual
Breathing Rate	Slow, shallow	Visual
	Normal	Kinesthetic or Auditory

Pacing and Leading

Pacing

Pacing techniques can help you achieve a deeper level of rapport. Part of pacing is the matching and mirroring techniques that we just discussed. Another part is including true statements in your conversation to give more credibility to other statements. (Research shows that you must use at least three true statements in a row for this to work.) Hearing several true statements in a row also lowers their guard and makes them more open to agreeing with you.

Imagine that you're at a seminar listening to a sales pitch.

Scenario One

The speaker starts out with, "Thanks for coming! I'm going to tell you about my new product that you'll love."

Does that grab your attention? Are you convinced that you'll love this product?

Scenario Two

Now let's try this with NLP. The speaker says:

- Ñ It's a beautiful sunny morning!
- Ñ It's really early.
- Ñ We've all come here for a reason.

Then, he might move into some more speculative statements:

- Ñ I know you're all happy to be here.
- Ñ I imagine that you're interested in my new product.
- Ñ I bet that you would like to do more in less time.

Now he might introduce the statements that are new to you:

- Ñ You are going to love this product.
- Ñ You won't want to wait to get your hands on this.

How do you feel now?

Leading

Once you have established rapport, you might be able to influence the other person's behavior without them realizing it! Test this with a small gesture, like adjusting your posture or tugging your earlobe. If the person mirrors or matches your gesture in some way, you're all set to continue leading! If not, you'll need to deepen rapport some more.

If the person that you are communicating with is now in a receptive state, you can use your body language to influence their state of mind. For example, if they seem to be in a dissociative state, you can try leaning forward and using more gestures (both associative behaviors).

Remember that the key is to incorporate influencing behaviors subtly and naturally so that the other person isn't offended or annoyed.

Role Play

Preparation

Erin/Aaron

Erin/Aaron manages a team of 12 support representatives. An opportunity to lead a new team has come up and she feels that Avery is the right person for the job. Avery is reluctant, however, feeling that she doesn't have the right skills.

Avery

Avery has been a support representative for ten years. He is happy in his current role and enjoys dealing with customers. He recently heard about an opportunity to lead a new team. He thinks the opportunity is interesting but doesn't feel confident that he would be a good choice.

Task

Erin/Aaron has set up a meeting to discuss this opportunity with Avery. She will use NLP (particularly the tools that we learned about in this section) to build rapport with Avery and convince him that he is right for the job. After eight minutes, partners will switch roles.

Test Your Knowledge

Notes
